
PART FIVE

TERRORISM COUNTERACTION

Terrorists employ the calculated use of violence or threat of violence to attain political, religious, or ideological goals. Because military personnel and military police serve as protectors of society, terrorists consider them to be their adversaries. Terrorists believe successful attacks against military targets show the vulnerability of the established society. They also believe successful attacks help show terrorism to be a means of effective change. Throughout the world the MP endeavor to ensure that US Army personnel and facilities are perceived as undesirable targets.

Terrorists are extremely dedicated and must not be underrated. They are formidable adversaries. The use of terrorist tactics worldwide has increased over the years, and this upward trend is not expected to abate in the near future. Terrorists are becoming more daring, ruthless, and willing to go to violent extremes to accomplish their goals. Terrorists prefer operations that have a high probability of success and escape. But terrorists may choose a hardened, well-defended target, especially if success is likely and if they can justify the end result as worth the risk.

Terrorist groups have active cadres who train other terrorists. These trainers emphasize tactics that have been proven successful. Terrorists reconnoiter and maintain extensive surveillance to gather detailed intelligence. They plan and rehearse their attacks. The trainers teach measures to counter response actions and innovations. And as governments take action to counter terrorism, terrorist organizations often alter their tactics.

The many existing terrorist organizations constitute a threat for both peacetime and wartime. The probability of terrorism and other acts of sabotage and subversion is heightened during periods of hostilities.

Terrorism can be a means for a nation to project power. Terrorism may be used to exhaust or deplete another nation's will or the resources of its armed forces. Terrorism, when used to cause governments to react repressively, can foment feelings of hatred toward government leaders and institutions.

The structure of most terrorist groups prevents intelligence sources from infiltrating. But it is known that terrorist cadres often carry out orders from higher level leaders. And the groups are often maintained by strong political support. Terrorist groups are capable of diverting resources and disrupting the operations of government agencies using only a few persons and small amounts of equipment. In time of war, it is expected that these groups will use their skills, resources, and terror tactics to further their objectives.

The MP role in terrorism counteraction is clear: prevent when possible, respond and resolve when required. In both peace and war MP deter, deny, detect, delay, and respond to terrorist attacks. On the battlefield MP help protect units and facilities against the Level I threat of spies, saboteurs, terrorists, and enemy forces as part of their area security mission. (See FM 19-4 for details on MP terrorism counteraction on the battlefield.)

In peacetime MP help protect personnel, equipment, and facilities against spies, saboteurs, and terrorists as part of their law and order mission. Terrorism always entails criminal activity. Terrorist goals are achieved through intimidation, coercion, and instilling fear. Terrorist groups often hold hostages or undertake kidnappings to obtain material or political demands. Common terrorist tactics include bombings, hijackings, arson, and ambush. MP undertake peacetime terrorism counteraction to help suppress crime and maintain order.